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ABSTRACT

In many cases the only solution to dealing with unsuccessful teachers is to encourage them to go into some other profession. However, it is also the obligation of principals to make certain the beginning teachers get all the assistance that can be provided them to avoid the pitfalls and difficulties that the challenge of the classroom presents. Beginning teachers especially must be frequently supervised, encouraged, directed, and corrected. Beginning teachers are more receptive to peer interest than to suggestions and directives from principals; therefore, the experienced teacher who will sit down and work with beginners at a one-to-one level is helpful. (Author/MLF)

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WORKING WITH THE UNSUCCESSFUL TEACHER

A Talk Given at the 61st Annual Convention
of the National Association of
Secondary School Principals
New Orleans, Louisiana
January 14 - 19, 1977

By: Brother Donnan Berry, S.C., Principal
Brother Martin High School
New Orleans, Louisiana

Our topic for today, "Working With the Unsuccessful Teacher," is one of tremendous interest and value to us all and to education in general. I hope that the brief time which I have been alotted to make this presentation will be sufficient to stimulate a lively discussion in which we will be able to share ideas and problems on this important issue.

As all of you are aware, a great deal of research has been done in this area. Sad to say, most of it has been inconclusive. However, an as-yet unpublished study was conducted last year which I believe will be a major break through in the area. It was brought to my attention by one of the teachers in my school and will, I feel certain, be discussed in professional journals in great detail in the near future. The work is the result of the efforts of Broadhurst, Spataforo and Spitz at Specious State University and was quite exhaustive.

The study involved a comprehensive view of the principal's self image, the image of the principal held by most faculty members, and the images both good and bad with which faculty members are regarded by the principal.

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After a brief introductory comment with regard to the principal's self-image and the manner in which he is viewed by faculty members, we will limit ourselves to a consideration of only six of the 168 types of unsuccessful teachers designated in this scholarly undertaking. To begin the presentation, I will use several overheads depicting figures from the study since I feel that they are the most effective and efficient manner in which to acquaint you with our subject matter and hopefully stimulate discussion.

Our first overhead depicts the findings of the study as to how the principal regards himself. (I)

Secondly, how the faculty views the principal. (II)

And now, the six types of unsuccessful teachers to which I will limit my discussion for purposes of brevity:

The Tyrant (III)

The Pushover (IV)

The Snower (V)

The Egg-head (VI)

The Trembler (VII)

The Masochist (VIII)

Ladies and gentlemen, we who have been in education for so long know that we can readily agree with Broadhurst, Spataforo and Spitz in their conclusion that the only way to deal with these unsuccessful teachers is to fire them!

However, I feel that with all of the expertise present in this room today, we can arrive at alternate solutions to a very difficult problem; and I would like to spend a few moments in sharing my thoughts on these alternate solutions with you.

I remember only two things from the History of Education course which I took many, many years ago. One of these is that in the Greek and Roman gymnasia, the students wore no clothes. The other fact that I recall is that teachers and doctors were slaves in the Greek and Roman society. Naturally, I marvel that the medical profession has risen way above the slave status, whereas our own profession still maintains many vestiges of forced servitude, especially with regard to the great difference in the financial remuneration awarded those in the two professions.

We must face the fact that the doctors got smart a lot faster than we did. And it never ceases to amaze me that people will pay huge amounts of money almost without question when it comes to the physical care of their children but are most reluctant to grant a just reward to us who deal with something much more important than a child's physical well-being, namely, his mental and moral health.

All of us are aware of the tremendous efforts which the medical profession has made here in the United States to defeat socialized medicine. However, for the major part, teachers have been socialized since the very beginning of the public school system. And it is my conviction that this relegation to a less than professional status has been fortified and perhaps made impregnable by the on-set of teachers unions.

It is my sincere hope and prayer, however, that we eventually will be able to obtain the status we justly deserve, thereby being much more certain that we will attract more top-notch people into the teaching profession.

Before attempting to become a little more practical, I would like to share with you briefly a few more philosophical foundations for our consideration today. For one thing, after 30 years of experience in education, 15 of which have been spent as a principal, I am more and more convinced that there is no administrative technique, audio-visual tool, computer, or anything that can replace the "good" teacher dealing face to face daily with the students in the classroom. Further, I believe that teaching is the most demanding profession of all, especially on the emotions of the teacher. And, finally I feel very strongly that there is only a very limited number of people who are intellectually, emotionally, and psychologically capable of being effective teachers. What I'm saying, I suppose, is that teachers can be "made" only if they have certain

basic qualities conducive to such development.

Even though I was being facetious in my opening remarks today, I do feel that all of us must realize that in many cases the only solution to dealing with unsuccessful teachers with whom we have worked over a period of time is to encourage them to go into some other profession. However, I also believe that it is our obligation as principals to make certain that beginning teachers get all of the assistance that we can possibly provide them to avoid the pitfalls and difficulties which the challenge of the classroom presents. Beginning teachers especially must be frequently supervised, encouraged, directed, and corrected. To do otherwise is a violation of justice.

In our situation at Brother Martin High School here in New Orleans, we are blessed to have a classroom visitor and all department chairmen who take these responsibilities very seriously. But even more helpful for beginning teachers is the experienced teacher who will sit down and work with beginners at the one-to-one level. I find that beginning teachers are much more receptive to peer interest than to suggestions and directives from the top, as it were. Fortunately, we have many experienced and exceptionally effective teachers who are willing to give our beginning teachers a great deal of their time and to share their talents and experience with them.

There is another danger, however, which I feel certain all of you are well

acquainted with. And that is the tendency of some teachers to fall into a rut and to

become disenchanted with the challenge of the classroom as they grow in age. These, too, need our attention, our constant encouragement, and our frequent efforts to stimulate growth. These teachers, of course, present a greater challenge because they have tenure and because they are psychologically disposed to resent even constructive criticisms of their work or their lack thereof. Frequent classroom supervision, constant encouragement, and the challenge of new and different teaching techniques must be presented to them if they are to survive as effective teachers.

I am certain that you are aware that I have said nothing very new or very erudite. I have purposely kept my discussion at this level because (1) I do not know all of the answers and (2) this is a discussion session, not an opportunity for you to feed at the trough of wisdom. Were it the latter, there is no way I could be standing here before you.

So, I eagerly look forward to the exchange which I hope will take place among us in just a few minutes.

God bless you all and thank you for your kind attention.

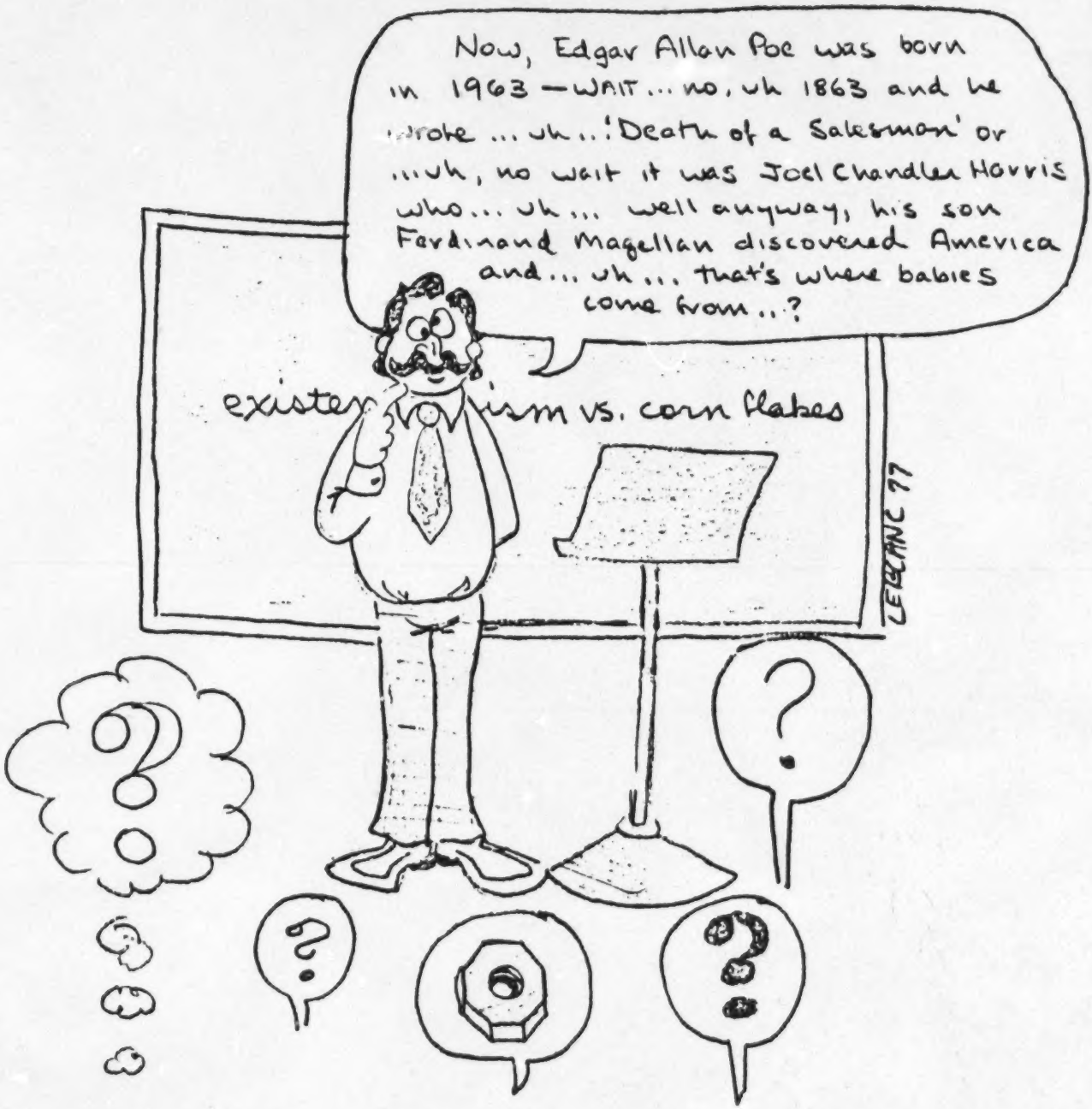
(Art work by Mr. André LeBlanc, English Department, Brother Martin High School.)

I HOW THE PRINCIPAL VIEWS HIMSELF

II THE FACULTY'S VIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL

III THE TYRANT

IV THE PUSH-OVER


Now, Edgar Allan Poe was born in 1963 — WAIT... no, uh 1863 and he wrote ... uh..! 'Death of a Salesman' or ...uh, no wait it was Joel Chandler Harris who... uh... well anyway, his son Ferdinand Magellan discovered America and... uh... that's where babies come from..?
existen ism vs. corn flakes
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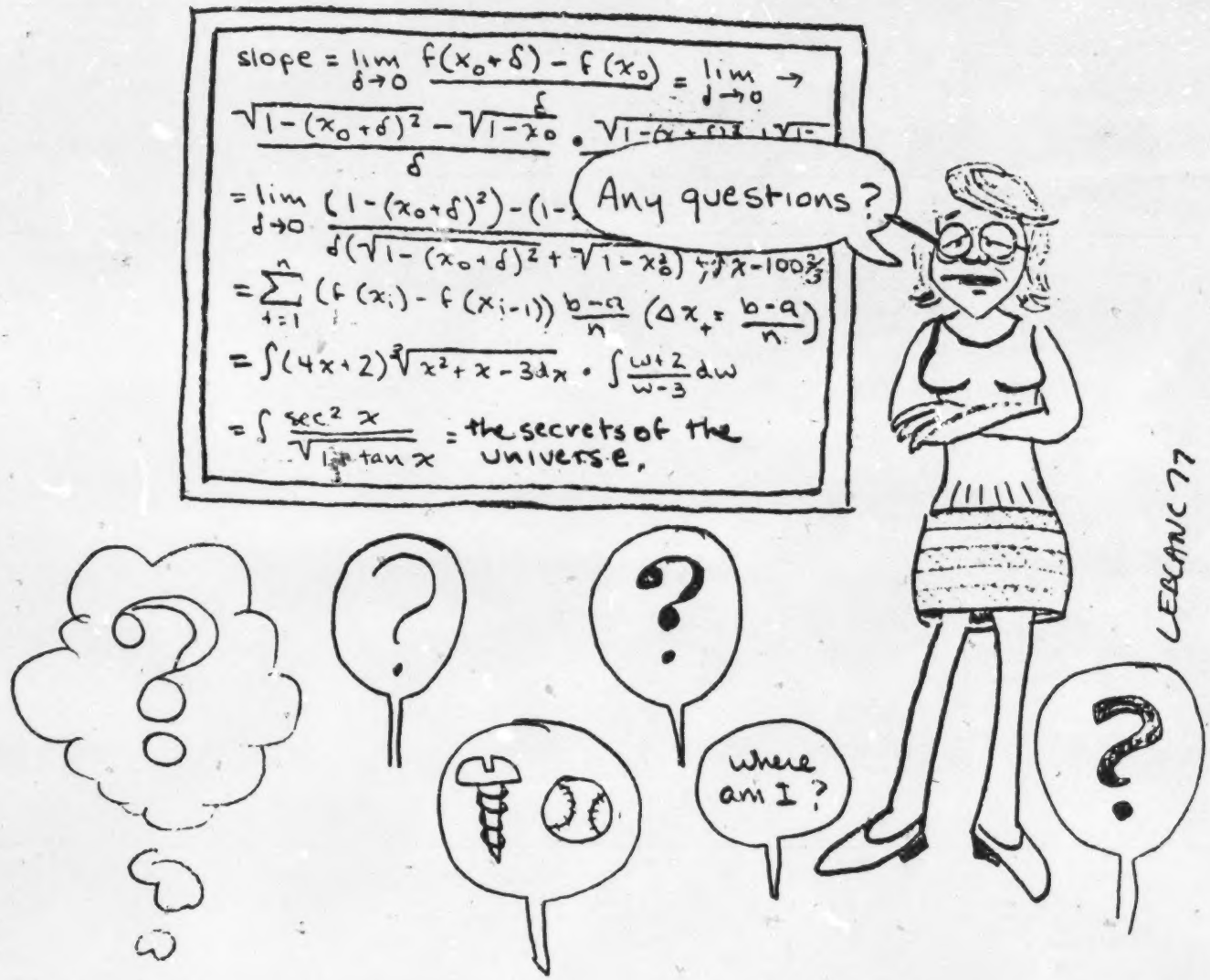
V THE SNOWER


slope = $\lim_{\delta \to 0} \frac{f(x_0+\delta) - f(x_0)}{\delta} = \lim_{\delta \to 0} \rightarrow$
$\frac{\sqrt{1-(x_0+\delta)^2} - \sqrt{1-x_0^2}}{\delta}$
$= \lim_{\delta \to 0} \frac{(1-(x_0+\delta)^2) - (1-$
$= \sum_{i=1}^{n} (f(x_i) - f(x_{i-1})) \frac{b-a}{n} \left(\Delta x_i = \frac{b-a}{n}\right)$
$= \int (4x+2)\sqrt[3]{x^2+x-3}\,dx \cdot \int \frac{w+2}{w-3}\,dw$
$= \int \frac{\sec^2 x}{\sqrt{1+\tan x}} =$ the secrets of the universe.
Any questions?
where am I?
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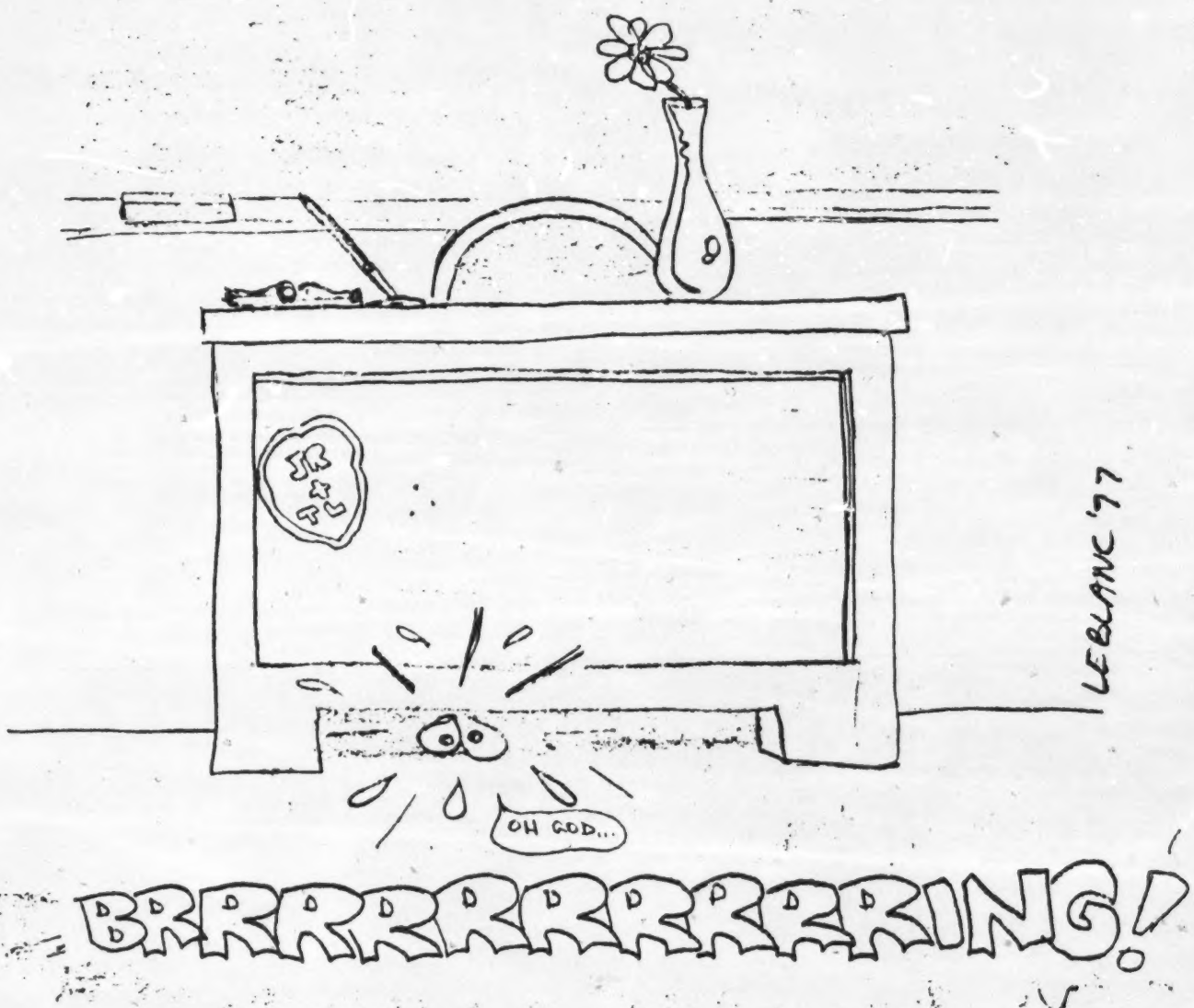
VI THE EGG-HEAD

OMLWORK: pg. 58 & 59
Exercises A, B, C, D, E



~~Sadist~~

VIII THE ~~MASOCHIST~~